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A TV TIMEOUT FOR A WAR?

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Washington—An ex-CIA official told Congress yesterday that the United States should stage preemptive strikes against terrorist groups and a military expert said Americans might accept war if it is "sold on television" like toothpaste.

Ray Cline, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1962 to 1966, told joint hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations and Judiciary committees that the Soviet Union is the principal supporter of international terrorism and called for counterstrikes against terrorists who threaten Americans.

That testimony came as the CIA issued a carefully worded statement responding to reports that a car bombing in Lebanon March 8 was carried out by people hired by a Lebanese counterterrorism unit that had been working with the CIA. More than 80 people were killed in the blast and hundreds were wounded.

THE CIA DENIED training any Lebanese "security forces" who later reportedly arranged for others to set off the car bomb.

In Beirut, Education and Labor Minister Selim Hoss said he doubted

Lebanon would order an investigation into the reports.

"If we were in a country that respected itself we would have demanded an investigation," said Hoss, the leading Sunni Moslem moderate in the year-old coalition government.

"But investigations in Lebanon are tantamount to burying the truth," he said.

In response to Cline's call for counterstrikes against terrorists, Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) said a military response may "risk far more than we have to gain."

HE SUGGESTED that the "logical" response to terrorism appeared to be retaliation against the Soviet Union and asked Cline what action could be taken that would not lead to war.

Such preemptive attacks, Cline said, should be "carefully selected responses" carried out by special military forces.

Another expert witness, Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corp., a private "think tank," said he would "hesitate to underestimate" the will of the American people to go to war if convinced it was the only way to deal with an adversary.

"War is like toothpaste," he said, "It has to be sold on television."